

As we edge closer to our next discussion on health reform, we need to ask, is medical care a civic and social right like police and fire services, education, and environmental protection?

Or is health care “you’re on your own?”

This decision must be made. I hope I can count on my colleagues and our endorsing organizations to advance a shared vision for health reform by adopting AmeriCare.

Attached is a short summary of AmeriCare. More can be found on my website at www.house.gov/stark.

AMERICARE HEALTH CARE ACT OF 2006—BILL SUMMARY

Overview: The AmeriCare Health Care Act (“AmeriCare”) is a practical proposal to ensure that everyone has health coverage in our country. It builds on what works in today’s health care system to provide simple, affordable, reliable health insurance. People would continue to obtain health coverage through their employer or they would be covered under the new AmeriCare system, modeled on Medicare.

Using the administrative efficiencies within Medicare and building on the existing coverage people receive through their jobs today, we can create an affordable, efficient, and stable universal health care system in America—and guarantee access to medical innovation and the world’s most advanced providers and facilities.

Benefits: All residents of the U.S. and its territories are eligible to receive benefits through AmeriCare. The practical AmeriCare benefits package is tailored to meet the needs of working people and their families, including: preventive services; physician services; hospital services; maternity coverage; prescription medications; mental health services; affordable cost sharing and a realistic limit on out-of-pocket costs.

AmeriCare provides additional benefits for children under age 24 and people with modest income. Supplemental benefits could be offered by employers or purchased through private insurance companies. It also improves Medicare’s existing benefit structure to conform with AmeriCare, providing streamlined cost-sharing and lower drug prices—without a donut hole.

Financing: AmeriCare is financed through contributions from employers, individuals, and states, all of whom pay into our current health care system. Unlike today’s system, however, AmeriCare will save billions of dollars by utilizing Medicare’s highly efficient administrative infrastructure that operates on a 2% margin. Requiring the Secretary to negotiate with the pharmaceutical industry for reasonable prices and expanding the use of health information technology in the clinical setting will achieve additional savings. The efficiencies gained from these steps will keep AmeriCare’s premiums affordable.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, on July 19, 2006, I mistakenly voted “no” on rollcall No. 384. I intended to vote in support of Mr. WATT’s amendment to preserve the authority of the United States Supreme Court to hear or decide any question pertaining to the interpretation of, or the validity under the Constitution of, the Pledge of Allegiance, as defined in 4 U.S.C. section 4, or its recitation.

A TRIBUTE TO DEBORAH MARICA CLEMONT

HON. G. K. BUTTERFIELD

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Deborah Marica Clemonts one of my most deserving constituents who is being honored as Small Business Owner of the Year by the Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Deborah Clemonts is a small business owner in Halifax County who owns a beauty shop, barber shop, restaurant and has held the food service contract for Halifax Community College and the local community Adult Day Care for the past 3 years. Many of the special events that I have held in my Weldon Congressional Office have been catered by Deborah so I know first hand of her impressive, conscientious, professional work.

With all of the activity associated with managing these businesses, Deborah still finds the time to dedicate to the youth of First Baptist Church in Weldon, North Carolina, where the dynamic Reverend Quientrell Burrell is the pastor. Deborah is responsible for all of the youth-related activities of the church which include the Youth Choir, Junior Usher Board and the First Baptist Church Praise Dancers. I have learned that any evening of the week you can see Deborah driving around in the First Baptist Church van picking up and dropping off children or taking them to the Pizza Hut treating them to a pizza before turning them back over to their parents. Deborah is compassionate about the community youth and is trying to do her part in assisting in their growth as grounded, productive citizens. Mr. Speaker, I have learned that the youth have a special affection for Deborah such that they often willingly confide in her and look to her for advice and counsel with many of the problems that they are forced to confront daily. Whenever there is an opportunity, Deborah hires some of the youth to assist her with restaurant-related activities and takes every opportunity to mentor them about work ethic, professionalism and the importance of putting their best foot forward.

Mr. Speaker, I know the Clemonts family well and I know that Deborah’s father, Reverend James Clemonts would be so proud of this honor bestowed upon her by the Roanoke Valley Chamber of Commerce. I know that none of what Deborah has accomplished was easy. But in spite of the many obstacles, Deborah pressed on and I wish her continued success. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to one of the pillars in the First Congressional District, Ms. Deborah Marica Clemonts.

HONORING FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS THOMAS J. MANTON

SPEECH OF

HON. NITA M. LOWEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 24, 2006

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the legacy and accomplishments of our recently-passed colleague Thomas Manton.

Tom Manton’s life epitomized the American dream. Born to Irish immigrants in 1932, he worked to put himself through college and law school and eventually rose to become one of the most influential politicians in New York City.

After attending Catholic school in Queens and Brooklyn, Tom enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving from 1951 to 1953. He went on to graduate from St. Johns University in 1958 and earned his law degree there in 1962. In addition to his service defending our country in the armed forces, Tom put his life on the line protecting the citizens of New York in the police force from 1955 to 1960.

After serving on the New York City Council from 1970 to 1984, Tom was elected to Congress. He served proudly and responsibly for seven terms in the House of Representatives, during which he also became Chair of the Queens Democratic Party.

In his work with the Queens Democrats, he brought those of all different racial and ethnic backgrounds into the political fold. Although he followed the tradition of Irish Catholic influence in New York City politics, he recruited candidates of all ethnic backgrounds to truly represent the diversity that exists throughout Queens on all levels of government.

It is a testament to the respect Tom Manton earned and to the counsel he provided that during the 1992 Presidential campaign, then Governor Bill Clinton visited the Queens Democratic Party Headquarters in Forest Hills to speak with Tom. Additionally, Tom advised Mayor Michael Bloomberg during his initial city-wide campaign in 2001.

On a personal note, I will miss the plain-spoken style of Tom Manton. When I first came to Congress in 1989, Tom provided me with a bevy of candid advice. During our time in Congress together, I considered him a close advisor, was honored to call him my colleague, and more importantly, always valued our friendship.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in paying respect to the family of Thomas Manton and offering condolences to all those who have benefited from his service to our country.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 25, 2006

Mr. BECERRA. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 24, 2006, I was unable to cast my floor vote on rollcall Nos. 394, 395 and 396. The votes I missed included motions to suspend the rules and pass the Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005 (S. 1496), the National Heritage Areas Act of 2005 (S. 203) and a bill to establish a grant program whereby moneys collected from violations of the corporate average fuel economy program are used to expand infrastructure necessary to increase the availability of alternative fuels (H.R. 5534).

Had I been present for the votes, I would have voted “aye” on rollcall Nos. 394, 395 and 396.